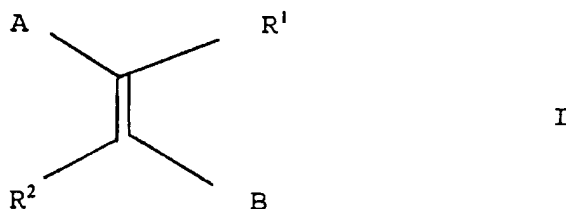


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CLAIMS

1. A method of preparing a first polymeric compound which comprises providing a compound of general formula

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or a salt thereof where A and B are the same or different and at least one comprises a relatively polar atom or group and R¹ and R² independently comprise relatively non-polar atoms or groups, in a solvent of a type in which ethene itself is generally insoluble and causing the groups C=C in said compound to react with one another to form a polymeric structure.

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2. A method according to claim 1, wherein R¹ and R² are independently selected from a hydrogen atom or an optionally substituted alkyl group.

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3. A method according to claim 1 or claim 2, wherein said solvent is a polar solvent.

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4. A method according to any preceding claim, wherein said compound of general formula I is provided in said solvent at a concentration at which molecules of said compound aggregate.

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5. A method according to any preceding claim, wherein the groups C=C in said compound are caused to react in a photochemical reaction.

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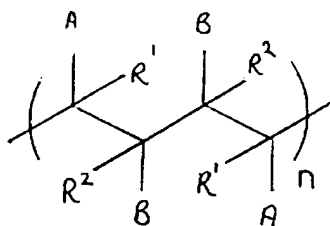
6. A method according to any preceding claim, wherein A and B are independently selected from optionally-substituted alkyl, cycloalkyl, cycloalkenyl, cycloalkynyl, aromatic and heteroaromatic groups.

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7. A method according to any preceding claim, wherein A and B each independently represent optionally-substituted aromatic or heteroaromatic groups.

10 8. A novel first polymeric compound having the formula

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wherein A and B are the same or different and at least one comprises a relatively polar atom or group, R<sup>1</sup> and R<sup>2</sup> independently comprise relatively non-polar atoms or groups and n is an integer.

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9. A method of preparing a formulation comprising providing a first polymeric compound prepared in a method according to any of claims 1 to 7 or according to claim 8 in a solvent together with a second polymeric compound and intimately mixing the compounds.

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10. A method according to claim 9, wherein said second polymeric compound includes one or more functional groups capable of reacting with said first polymeric compound.

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11. A method according to claim 9 or claim 10, wherein said second polymeric compound is selected from optionally substituted polyvinylalcohol, polyvinylacetate,

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polyalkylene glycols and collagen (and any component thereof).

- 5 12. A formulation comprising a first polymeric compound prepared in a process according to any of claims 1 to 7 or as described in claim 8 and a second compound as described in any of claims 9 to 11.
- 10 13. A method of preparing a material, the method comprising providing a mixture prepared as described in any of claims 9 to 11 or a formulation according to claim 12 in a solvent and causing the first and second compounds to react with one another.
- 15 14. A method according to claim 13, wherein an acid is provided.
- 20 15. A method of collecting and/or isolating and/or emulsifying oil (or the like) which comprises contacting oil (or the like) with a reaction mixture according to claim 13 or claim 14 so that said oil (or the like) becomes incorporated into a material which forms.
- 25 16. A material preparable by a method according to any of claims 13 to 15.